

## **Assembly Joint Resolution No. 38**

### **RESOLUTION CHAPTER 99**

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 38—Relative to military and veterans.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 15, 2014.]

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AJR 38, Salas. Fair employment and housing: military and veteran status.

This measure would request Congress to pass and the President to sign into law Senate Bill 1281 and House Resolution 2654, and encourages the members of the California Congressional Delegation to join as coauthors on those measures.

WHEREAS, Fewer than 7 percent of Americans have ever served in the United States Armed Forces and less than 1 percent wears the uniform today. Taken as a group, military members and veterans are in the minority. While other minority groups enjoy certain protections and advantages under the law, those who have served and fought for their country currently enjoy no such comprehensive legal consideration; and

WHEREAS, Frequently those who have served and sacrificed are at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers and employment is often the first obstacle that veterans must overcome during their transition from the military to civilian life; and

WHEREAS, Employment is often the lynchpin that holds families and lives together; and

WHEREAS, The value and importance of appropriate, living wage employment cannot be underestimated in the overall transition from the military to the civilian workforce and the best approach for dealing with transition issues is a holistic approach, which takes into account that employment is an integral facet of a veteran's overall continuum of well-being. The negative effects of long-term unemployment are especially devastating to service members who may also be suffering from additional stressors such as: repeated deployments, marital discord, domestic violence, multiple moves, substance abuse, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, homelessness, or suicidal thoughts; and

WHEREAS, It is not unusual for veterans transitioning from military to civilian employment to enter the workforce years behind their high school or college classmates, and while their contemporaries have completed college, held internships, entered the workforce, established expertise in their fields, and built a professional network of contacts, those who have served, regardless of experience or rank, are often forced to begin their civilian careers at or near the bottom of the employment ladder; and

WHEREAS, Even though veterans bring a wealth of valuable experiences to the workforce, their time in the military may often not be understood or appreciated by civilian employers. Misperceptions about veterans greatly contribute to high levels of veteran unemployment and underemployment; and

WHEREAS, Veterans must also overcome the negative press about the effects and repercussions of prolonged wars, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and other mental health issues affecting increasing numbers of returning veterans, and there is a common perception of veterans as “ticking time bombs,” “unstable and dangerous,” or “damaged goods”; and

WHEREAS, It is recognized that the practice of denying employment opportunity and discriminating in the terms of employment for these reasons foments domestic strife and unrest, deprives the state of the fullest utilization of its capacities for development and advancement, and substantially and adversely affects the interests of employees, employers, and the public in general; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature deems it important to the state to protect and safeguard the right and opportunity of all persons to seek, obtain, and hold employment without discrimination or abridgment on account of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, or military and veteran status; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature passed Assembly Bill 556 (Chapter 691 of the Statutes of 2013), which added military and veteran status to the California Fair Employment and Housing Act; and

WHEREAS, The State of California urges the government of the United States to enact similar protections at the federal level in acknowledgment of the tremendous sacrifices our veterans have made for this nation and to ensure that veterans enjoy the same legally mandated, nondiscriminatory access to housing, employment, and training opportunities as are afforded to other deserving individuals; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 1281 by Senator Richard Blumenthal and House Resolution 2654 by Representative Derek Kilmer seek to accomplish these aims at the federal level; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly,* That the Legislature requests Congress of the United States to pass and the President to sign into law Senate Bill 1281 and House Resolution 2654, and encourages the members of the California Congressional Delegation to join as coauthors on those measures; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States and to the Members of the United States Congress.